STRANGE DE JIM,
'I MADE HERB CAEN...'

$1.95
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HAH!
I MADE HERB CAEN & I CAN BREAK HIM

THE TRUTH AT LAST!

12/21/76 - Among the soloists in the California Historical Society's annual carols program: Holly de Berry. A real name, too! No relation to Strange de Jim or Harry de Wildt, both fictional characters invented by desperate columnists.

The cover photo is by Michael Shannon. In case you were wondering, it captures Strange in the act of picking up a new Metasexual convert or "grasshopper" and was first published in the May, 1978, special tenth anniversary issue of After Dark magazine.

HAH! I MADE HERB CAEN, AND I CAN BREAK HIM

by

STRANGE DE JIM

Also: Metasexual Musings and the Best of Strange de Jim's Comments Printed in Herb de Caen's Column in the San Francisco Chronicle and Some He Wouldn't

HAH! I MADE HERB CAEN, AND I CAN BREAK HIM

"Wow, Strange, you'd better not let Herb Caen find out you do things like this. He'd never print any of your quotes ever again."

Such talk doesn't bother me (although I certainly wish I had a million dollars for every time somebody has said it to me). "Hah," I always reply. "I'm not worried. I made Herb Caen, and I can break him."

This for some reason invariably sends my listeners off into peals of laughter. "You made him!" they shriek, clutching their sides and slapping their thighs and rolling off the bed with little or no regard for the safety of their persons. "Hoo boy, that's a good one!" What brings on this unseemly hilarity I don't know, but then I've never claimed to understand human humor.

I don't have time to worry about it, in any event. I'm too busy putting together Metasexual Exercises, the workbook I'm preparing for the use of my own grasshoppers and for the less discriminating members (I know mine is) of the somewhat general public. The book will feature a holistic approach to sex, of course; and to my knowledge it will be the first how-to sex manual ever written by a complete outsider.

It isn't turning out to be an easy book to write. We Metasexuals believe, for example, that there is no part of a person's body which is any more private than any other part. We know that by becoming very, very very still, it is possible to discover the same being peeking out through every pore, regardless of where that pore is located on our victim's skin.

Real sex involves turning on, not the body, but

this shy beautiful hidden being. A typical Metasexual exercise, therefore, might be to bring your partner to climax while touching only his or her feet. Another could be, without telling your partner what you are trying to do (and using only your hands), to get him or her to imagine that he and/or she is in ancient Egypt lying on a stone altar inside the Great Pyramid.

Such processes of thought transference and production of remote sensations are simple once you know the secret. The problem is that the secret is beyond words, and thus keeps slipping right out of my typewriter before I can get it into the book.

Then, too, I'm afraid that the leisurely Metasexual viewpoint is going to be a hard thing to get across in a nation which searches for "efficient" methods of meditation and which subscribes fully to the Eastern view that ideal love consists of four years of foreplay, but which wants to cram all four years into a single meaningful one night stand.

And even if people are interested, how can I draw them a verbal chart that will guide them across the vast Metasexual seas and into that secret whirlpool which has the power to swirl us down, down, down into the All? Or, to be more accurate, how can I describe the method for discovering that tiny voice which calls us from out of the heart of the whirlpool and guides us to itself without any need for charts or maps?

But just listen to me, blathering away like some starry-eyed Neophyte. You don't want to hear about the internal affairs of the Church of the Wholly Metasexual. You want to hear about Herb Caen.

Unfortunately, I'm afraid I can't help you there. I love his column; but, to be honest, I've never had the

pleasure of meeting the gentleman.

I can tell you what it's like appearing in his column though. Before Herb Caen adopted me (journalistically speaking, of course) I'd introduce myself to someone at a party and be greeted with, "Your name is What de Who?" Now I get, "You're Strange de Jim?! I thought you were just a fictional character Herb Caen dreamed up for the lines he was ashamed to print under his own name."

The other change is that now I have to wear a pillowcase over my swelled head in public to keep my H de C notoriety from slipping over into my other identity. But that's a small price to pay for the thrill of waking up in the morning and discovering with delight, "Hah! I made Herb Caen." It was that thrill, in fact, which gave me half the title for this book.

I rest my (pillow) case.

FROM HERB CAEN'S COLUMN

9/17/72 - Strange de Jim reports: "Since I didn't believe in reincarnation in any of my other lives, why should I have to believe in it in this one?"

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12/10/72 - "I never had any imaginary friends when I was a child," muses Strange de Jim. "I just thought I had."

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5/18/73 - Strange de Jim checking in on financial matters: "I've decided to quit paying $15 a year for an American Express card. Already my free BankAmericard is accepted in more places than I am."

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8/19/73 - "Count your blessings," advises Strange de Jim. "If your toilet worked, it might not be home when you needed it."

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8/26/73 - Our other roving elegant, Strange de Jim, was in top form while dining at Le Trianon. After the sommelier had gone through the uncorking, sniffing and pouring ritual, Strange swallowed the obligatory mouthful, looked up and declared triumphantly, "Wine, right?"

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11/28/74 - "The one thing I don't understand about Thanksgiving," confides Strange de Jim, "is how they get the turkey to eat all that dressing."

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1/31/75 - Front page newsquib in The Chronicle: "The sexual revolution is waning in America," a noted sociologist said. Exit Strange de Jim, singing, "Swinging in the wane; we're swinging in the wane ..."

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10/13/74 - "For an interesting existential afternoon," suggests Strange de Jim, "go to City Hall and try to renew your birth certificate." ... "The people who like my humor," he continues, "fall into two categories. And usually hurt themselves."

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4/6/75 - Further and perhaps final from the uncollected thoughts of Strange de Jim: "I live life to the full or

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11/25/73 - "An aphrodisiac," defines Strange de Jim, "is a drug two people take and then both pretend it worked".

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1/6/74 - Another fillip of folk wisdom from the febrile filliments of the filosofer known as Strange de Jim: "Triplets is when you have two brothers your own age, neither of which is you."

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1/6/74 - Strange de Jim wants to know why the Bank of America's vollyball team isn't called the Net Prophets.

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1/15/74 - ...and our old friend Strange de Jim, has risen to the occasion again: to brighten these dark days, he has invented a candle snuffer with a hole in the top so you can use it without putting out the candle.

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1/27/74 - "I wouldn't say my apartment building is dull," mumurs Strange de Jim, "but whenever I go out, the elevator is always still at my floor."

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2/10/74 - Along came Strange de Jim, cogitating in public. "While walking on lower Octavia," he said, "something kept bothering me. Why would people build such nice Victorians under a freeway?"

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3/6/74 - "I won't say things are bad," groans Strange de Jim, "but I just sold my first-born for a tank of gas and they didn't even clean my windshield."

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3/17/74 - Further from the uncollected thoughts of Strange de Jim: "Fools rush in and get all the best seats" ...

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4/7/74 - Strange de Jim wants to know if Coit Tower is the nozzle of the Transbay Tube, and we're checking.

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5/6/74 - "Since it's getting to be fashionable," confides Strange de Jim, "I'd like to become pansexual; but then what would I use to cook in? And if you do go the pansexual route, do you clean up afterwards with a Brillo pad?" ... Strange might recall that if you attend Chinese cooking school with the one you love you will never wok alone. Clunk?

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5/30/74 - BY THE WAY: Have you seen the ballot for next Tuesday's election? Frightening. In Elizabeth Weingand's words, "it looks like a Chinese lottery ticket." You'll be in that booth for hours, citizens; so you may want to emulate Strange de Jim: "I have a bar of soap, a towel to drape over the top, and a tape recording of a shower running. If it's a hit in my precinct, I plan to sell it as a kit."

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6/5/74 - SPRINGING foolblown from the fevered brow of Strange de Jim: "You have to be in the right place at the right time, but unfortunately I was absent the day they explained how that's done."

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7/23/74 - "Only in San Francisco," intones Strange de Jim, shaking his head. "Yesterday I saw a funeral procession with all the cars honking their horns; and on the hearse it said in shaving cream, 'Just Died.'"

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8/15/74 - ...You may prefer a few words from Strange de Jim: "I won't say I had a good time last weekend, but one morning I had to go to four rooms in the hotel just to get dressed."

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11/10/74 - ..."Do any of your readers know where I can get some acupuncture needles?" inquires Strange de Jim. "I already have a thimble" ...

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12/17/74 - ..."The thing I like about meditation," adds Strange de Jim, "is that it makes doing nothing respectable."

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12/25/74 - Strange de Jim asks, "Is it true that Santa Claus won't come to San Francisco any longer because

too many of his elves defect?"

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1/3/75 - Strange de Jim's first for '75: "I found a way to fight inflation and reach enlightenment at the same time. I'm investing all my money in gold prayer beads."

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2/14/75 - "This may not be my year after all," says Strange de Jim nervously. "I just received three threatening Valentines."

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3/12/75 - "INSTEAD OF raising rates," mumbles Strange de Jim, "why doesn't the PG&E lower the speed of light? Anyone who reads faster than 55 mph can simply use two bulbs" ...

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4/22/75 - ...(Not that I am the world's best literary critic. "You can't even judge a book by its CONTENTS," Strange de Jim once sneered).

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5/15/75 - ..."Although," adds Strange de Jim, "I don't see why environmentalists are against highrises -- they prevent soil erosion, don't they?"

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9/17/75 - ... "I knew I had a championship hangover this morning," groaned Strange de Jim yesterday, "when I discovered my eyes weren't opposite the holes."

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10/24/75 - ...In that department, "I refuse to buy suits at Wilkes Bashford," pouts Strange de Jim. "I don't like my clothes to look better than I do."

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11/14/75 - "IT'S TRUE that the police are being a bit overzealous," agrees Strange de Jim. "This morning I was making some coffee, and a cop gave me a perking ticket."

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11/16/75 - AS STRANGE DE JIM might say. "The only exercise I get these days is jogging my memory."

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11/27/75 - ...Or if that doesn't turn you on about 400 degrees, consider the plight of Strange de Jim: "If I can't get my oven fixed in time, I'm going to have to face this Thanksgiving cold turkey."

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12/8/75 - EXACTLY: "Did you ever feel," inquires Strange de Jim, "like somebody pushed in the cutting board that was covered with the mushrooms of your life?"

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12/17/75 - "Shopping for Christmas toys in San Francisco is just like shopping for toys anywhere else," agrees Strange de Jim, "except that here, for a Ken doll, you

buy Barbie clothes."

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12/31/75 - "Happy New Year and may you have better luck tonight. Or, as Strange de Jim advises, remember to smile at midnight "because there's nothing nicer than grinning from year-to-year!"

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1/18/76 - Strange de Jim predicts that next Christmas's Neiman Marcus catalogue will feature "Manhattan For Sale - Battery Not Included".

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1/26/76 - Strange de Jim has named his pet mountain Mohammed: "I've only had him a week, and already I've trained him to come to me".

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2/6/76 - ... I still say the most fascinating news story so far this year came out of Bloomington, Ind., the one about the drugstore owner who has invented edible underpants. To be franchised by Chock Full o' Nuts?

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2/29/76 - "I sometimes worry about my short attention span," confides Strange de Jim, "but not for very long."

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3/5/76 - Further updates: Our mention last Sunday of Slurp Jokes ("I love Spanish food, but an hour later I get acid inquisition") draws an exquisite entry from the inimitable Strange de Jim: "I like Polish food, but an hour later I've forgotten I ate."

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3/28/76 - "I like American food," confesses Strange de Jim, "but an hour later you're still licking your fingers."

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4/6/76 - "I disagree," murmurs Strange de Jim, "with those who say we should just let the Muni stay on strike forever. I have found the improvement in service since the strike began to be negligible."

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4/11/76 - So there still are colorful characters around. Like Strange de Jim. "I have often been mistaken," he concedes, "but never for Robert Redford."

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4/25/76 - Leave it to Strange de Jim! Today he has the all-time solution to the semi-annual problem of adjusting your clocks for Daylight Saving Time: "Why don't we just set all the clocks ahead a half-hour and have done with it?"

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4/28/76 - The first question in a Psychology and Contraceptive Methods true-or-false test given April 21 at UC-Berkeley: "A man can produce sperm until he dies,"

to which Strange de Jim could not resist appending, "At least it's more fun than getting killed crossing the street."

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5/9/76 - "As I understand it," ventures Strange de Jim in a wee voice, "the main value of sex education in public schools is to teach the students never to forget the 'Thank you, ma'am.'"

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5/20/76 - Strange de Jim, up and at 'em: "I've heard it said that Jimmy Carter couldn't tell a lie, but what I don't understand is whether that means 'if his life depended on it' or 'from the truth.'"

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5/27/76 - "Jimmy Carter," interjected Strange de Jim, "is living proof that it doesn't pay to overtip, not even the tooth fairy."

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6/10/76 - Mary Ann Singleton to Strange de Jim: Do you believe in a Supreme Being?" Strange: "Not since Diana Ross left."

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8/5/76 - Some dirty-minded readers: after I reprinted the fabulous filler reading: "It takes three people to artificially inseminate a whooping crane," Broker Charles Horton wondered if that's what's meant by "makin' whoopee," while Strange de Jim says I was wrong to suggest it takes two to hold her: "It's two to watch

for the game warden, dummy."

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9/7/76 - "I wanted you to be the first to know," confides Strange de Jim, "that I just got back from Chico, where I underwent the world's first sign-change operation. I was born a Cancer, but I always knew I was really a Leo. I hope society will accept me." Depends. Play tennis?

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9/14/76 - "Truly art imitates art," pontificates Strange de Jim. "Only now do we find that Christo's Running Fence in Sonoma was inspired by the three-foot mound of trash the city's merchants have been building down the sidewalks the entire length of Market Street."

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9/19/76 - Another fabulous filler in the old Chron: "By law you have to turn your headlights on when it's raining in Florida." To which Strange de Jim adds irritably, "All right, but who's going to let me know it's raining in Florida?"

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10/1/76 - And near Union Square, a policeman winning the plaudits of Strange de Jim by commanding stylishly to a crowd cluttering the corner: "Will a few of you passersby please do so?"

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10/26/76 - Sorry about that, Harry Reems. Harry is

the actor who could go to jail in darkest Tennessee for his part, as it were, in "Deep Throat," and Strange de Jim is properly sympathetic. "I'm sure," says Strange, "that he didn't realize he was being asked to stick his neck out as well."

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11/25/76 - Sentimental Thanksgiving note from Strange de Jim: "Remember, you are still OK as long as you get more pleasure out of eating your Thanksgiving turkey than you did stuffing it."

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12/7/76 - The latest fabulous filler in The Chron - "A snail's sex glands are half-way between the head and the shell" - caused these words to appear in a balloon over Strange de Jim's head: "Oh! No WONDER she would spend three days crawling over to get me to scratch behind her ears."

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1/20/77 - "I know a lot of bigoted people are upset over it," admits Strange de Jim, "but I for one admire the Muni's innovative program of busing muggers, purse snatchers and other members of the criminal minority."

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3/2/77 - Vital Juices Despite the Drought Dept.: "Remember the good old days," laments Strange de Jim, "when the only moral decision you had to make when you took a shower had nothing to do with wasting water?"

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2/8/78 - "Post-holiday sales must still be going on in the Tenderloin," muses that peerless observer, Strange de Jim. "The other night I drove through there at 3 a.m.; and there were already hordes of smartly dressed housewives lined up, waiting for the stores to open." No refunds, no exchanges.

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2/14/78 - And by the way, happy Valentine's Day! Especially if you own stock in Hallmark cards. "In honor of this romantic occasion," confides Strange de Jim, "several young ladies sent bouquets of forget-me's."

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3/7/78 - I like Mexican food," confesses Strange de Jim, "but only from the waist up." It is Strange who defines "kinky" as a lady showing up at an orgy wearing No Nonsense "Control Top" pantyhose. "In San Francisco, of course, it's a gentleman doing the same."

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4/17/78 - "I love Mexican gourmet food," gushes Stange de Jim. "Is there any dish more exciting than Thousand Year Old Fritos?"

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5/30/78 - Whatever happened to Strange de Jim? Well, he's back from Palm Springs where he lunched at Louise's, which features "Home-Style Meals" that really are. When he asked if dessert came with the meal, the waitress snapped, "Not unless you finish your vegetables!"

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6/2/78 - A cooling thought for today from Strange de Jim: "An inventive host is one who, when he runs out of ice cubes, quickly substitutes frozen hamburger patties."

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6/4/78 - "Does it matter that nothing matters any more?" asks the prince of local philosophers, Strange de Jim.

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6/11/78 - Wilde talk: "I'm going to write a book about a dragon that goes flaming through San Francisco," said Armistead Maupin. "Makes sense," nodded Strange de Jim. "Early works always tend to be autobiographical."

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7/20/78 - And welcome back, Strange de Jim! "Last night I was habituating Enrico's when it suddenly struck me that the line outside Heaven is going to be EXACTLY like the one waiting to get into Finocchio's."

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7/30/78 - Before the movie starts, the Clay Theater flashes a sign reading "Smoking on Left Side Only." You DO get an interesting effect when you pinch your right nostril shut, confides Strange de Jim.

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8/7/78 - Woman describing her home town to Strange de Jim: "I live in Los Gatos - you know, the Hillsborough

of San Jose." It is a concept with which Strange is still wrestling.

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8/28/78 - The sign on Strange de Jim's garage door: "No Parking - Unauthorized Vehicles Will Be Turned Into Toweds."

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8/30/78 - Comedian Henny Youngman, whose great tag line is "Take my wife - please," has been topped by our very own Strange de Jim, who, after catching Henny at the Mocambo, reports, "I took his wife. She seemed pleased."

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9/22/78 - Ah so: Strange de Jim was touched by our report on Ednah Root, the noted artist, chasing her dog from bush to bush on Nob Hill, jar in hand, to collect a sample for the veterinarian. "Somebody should have told her," he sympathizes. "The way to collect a urine sample from a dog is to remove the handle from his toilet so he can't flush!"

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10/11/78 - "I'm voting no on Propositon 5," comes the long-awaited announcement from Strange de Jim. "Today they ban the smoking of cigarets at jazz concerts. Tomorrow they'll try to tell me I can't smoke dope in church.

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10/16/78 - "I've changed my mind, flashes Strange de

Jim. "I'm voting yes on Prop. 5 - I don't want any of those cigaret smokers teaching MY kids."

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10/22/78 - "Speaking of waking up in a cold sweat," gasps Stange de Jim, "last night I dreamed there was a Sammy Davis III!"

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10/25/78 - During the "Yes on No on Six" benefit at Chez Jacques, Strange de Jim was asked his sexual preference, and I'm afraid he replied, "The Mormon Tabernacle Choir."

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NOW WHY WOULDN'T HE PRINT THESE?

Remember the good old days when Jackie O. was just something you sneaked into the bathroom and did?

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What God imagines is real. That's the difference.

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My massage victim today was a young gentleman who, in his embarrassment over how to ask whether or not he was supposed to be completely naked, blurted out, "Uh, what about my genitals?" I think I put him at ease by waving my hand airily and suggesting, "Oh, just leave them on."

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Someone asked me today whether the Bohemian Club is considered "exclusive". I assume it's not. They won't let me in.

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I've certainly learned my lesson. When your girlfriend moans, "Oh, I was a real mess yesterday," your proper reply is not, "Don't worry; I'm sure it will all clear up by tomorrow."

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Well, I tried walking around with books on my head, but I kept tripping over them.

¢¢¢¢

I always knew I was an incurable romantic, and now I have a report from the clinic to prove it.

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Those Jockey commercials are wrong. I've found it's much easier to support myself by not wearing underwear.

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I fear life consists of trying to find the common thread that's attached to the needle in the haystack, and I don't know a thing about either sewing or farming.

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You can always tell San Francisco kidnap victims. They're the ones who beg to be tied up while waiting for the ransom to be delivered.

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Remember, you're never too old to rob the cradle.

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If a lady comes into the room and catches you with an erection, the gentlemanly thing to do is to remark casually, "Oh, hi, I was just thinking about you."

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I think you would have liked my grandmother. Her favorite truth, usually uttered as she was scampering away from a group of rather startled sailors, was, "Heh,

heh, they never suspect old people."

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I called my parents long distance today, but I forgot about the time zone difference. They're still living in the '50's.

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Why is it that when a woman sleeps with everyone she's friendly; but when she'll sleep with anyone she's cheap?

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You know, sometimes I wonder if when I was born my mother wasn't facing the other way.

¢¢¢¢

Did you ever notice how funny ladies act when you ask if you can shave a racing stripe into their pubic hair?

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I've found that the best way to deal with those who insist upon asking, "Notice anything different?" is to hazard, "You've had a sex change operation?"

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I like bisexuals. With them you always know where you stand.

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And so to bed...

TALK ABOUT YOUR BASIC IDEAL GIFTS!

If you would like to enjoy this book in stereo, or if for some better-not-looked-into-too-closely reason you have an uncontrollable urge to bestow festively wrapped copies upon unsuspecting friends, additional volumes may be secured by sending $1.95 plus 40¢ postage and fondling to Strange de Jim, Dept. 2, P. O. Box ~~99076~~ 94547, San Francisco, Ca. ~~94109~~ 94114.

More good news! Metasexual Exercises is now ready and may be obtained by sending $2.65 ($2.25 plus 40¢) to the same address.

"Strange Experiences" are available in San Francisco. For details write the usual address.

I don't know why this all reminds me of my Uncle Warren's old adage: "You can sell anything on God's green earth if you can just get the customer to believe that it's stolen." But it does.

STRANGE DE SAYINGS

12/10/72 - "I never had any imaginary friends when I was a child," muses Strange de Jim. "I just thought I had."

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9/7/76 - "I wanted you to be the first to know," confides Strange de Jim, "that I just got back from Chico where I underwent the world's first sign-change operation. I was born a Cancer, but I always knew I was really a Leo."

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4/14/77 - "I suppose this rationing is necessary," muses Strange de Jim, "but I for one feel very foolish saving up water for a rainy day."

????

11/21/77 - Heeeere's Strange de Jim: "I knew for sure I had met the girl of my dreams when I heard her say last night, 'All right, Strange, once more; and this time I'LL be Donny and YOU be Marie.'"

****

8/30/78 - Comedian Henny Youngman, whose great tag line is "Take my wife - please," has been topped by our very own Strange de Jim, who, after catching Henny at the Mocambo, reports, "I took his wife. She seemed pleased."

land. "The most interesting ride," he reports, "is the one to the Anaheim police station when they catch you smoking dope on Tom Sawyer's Island."

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11/10/77 - "I may be writing you from jail from now on," confides Strange de Jim. "Last night I was arrested for a close encounter of the fourth kind!"

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11/20/77 - No one talks about what's RIGHT with the Muni. An elderly woman, with a cane, hauled herself aboard a Market streetcar and started down the aisle. When the driver yelled after her, "Hey, lady, you didn't pay your fare," she swung around, shook her cane at him and shouted, "You men are all alike. All you wanna do is f__k!" The motorman was so taken aback he let it drop. Sliding into a seat, she winked at fellow passenger Strange de Jim: "Works every time."

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11/21/77 - Heeeere's Strange de Jim: "I knew for sure I had met the girl of my dreams when I heard her say last night, 'All right, Strange, once more; and this time I'LL be Donny and YOU be Marie."

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12/9/77 - Strange de Jim has one for the "Hooboy, did I grow up in a tough neighborhood!" dept.: "My grandmother was the first person ever to receive a bad conduct discharge from the Hell's Angels."

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12/20/77 - "The holidays are such fun," glows Strange de Jim. "I especially love a party where a young lady climbs onto a chair and hollers, 'Am I the first to notice that there's an aphrodisiac in the champagne?.'"

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1/11/78 - Further cinemantics: "I saw a rerun of 'Goodbye Charlie' on TV the other night," muses Strange de Jim. "How is it possible to feel anything but affection for a country that would make Tony Curtis a movie star?"

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1/19/78 - "Well, I've found the secret of San Francisco," whispers Strange de Jim. "Steam beer turns people gay!"

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1/29/78 - "A true friend," defines Strange de Jim, "is one who says, 'You're getting so thin!' without adding 'on top.'"

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1/31/78 - The pain of it all: Upon coming across this listing in The Chron's TV log - "Movies: Trapeze, Tony Curtits (1956)" - Strange de Jim was heard to howl, "Omigawd, has my hero had a sex change ????"

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2/6/78 - What else is new here is a group called Sexual Compulsives Anonymous, Box 4117, whose "Requirement for Membership," states its folder, is "A desire to recover from sexual compulsion." This desire, Stange de Jim observes, proves you're sick.

4/14/77 - "I suppose this rationing is necessary," muses Strange de Jim, "but I for one feel very foolish saving up water for a rainy day."

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4/26/77 - Further viticulture: the marquee outside Sukkers Likkers on Polk reads "1961 Lafite Rothschild, $1,492.20 a Case," which struck Stange de Jim as excessive until the clerk told him it included a nickel deposit on each bottle.

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5/29/77 - "People who are hung up on nostalgia," scoffs Victor Vecsey, "are banal-rententives" (bringing to mind Strange de Jim's observation that "I'd rather be an anal-retentive than whatever's the opposite").

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7/20/77 - Add vacation reports: Strange de Jim has been in Rowlesburg, W. Va., visiting relatives, and quite liked it: "The restaurant closes at 4 p.m., there are 60-year-old men named 'Wee Wee' and 'Junior,' and being fashionably late means arriving no more than five minutes early." His brother, Huntington, has a two-year-old son who appeared in the living room wearing a dress and ladies' gloves. "He takes after his uncle's side of the family," Huntington explained hastily. And it was at a buffet party that Huntington said, "Care to eat a deviled egg?" Picking one up and examining it closely, Strange shrugged, "Might as well. It doesn't appear to be of museum quality."

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8/7/77 - Spinoffsky: "What Would You Change About

San Francisco?" was the Chronicle Question Man's quizzer a few days ago, and Michael Oesterman replied, "The street signs. Why can't they all be in the same place and the same size?" A neat idea, observes Strange de Jim, who suggests we make them all eight feet by ten feet and put them at California and Montgomery.

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8/12/77 - Now then: "I think," ventures Strange de Jim, "that we're trying to solve our ecological problems the hard way. Why don't we send up the Goodyear Blimp with a reminder for God, 'How Long Has It Been Since You've Cleaned the Cage and Put in Fresh Wate[illegible]'"

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9/1/77 - "Happiness," beams Strange de Jim, "is shopping at Cala Foods on a Saturday night for your first dinner at her place and having her say, 'Oh - and we'll need cereal for breakfast. Won't we?'"

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10/13/77 - Further foodnotes: "Joan Hitchcock,"confides Strange de Jim, "is hostessing a gourmet dinner tonight. She's going to have a crate of live chickens in the hall, and each guest gets to select his own."

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10/23/77 - And herewith the serious side of Strange de Jim: "Time, turtle with cat's claws, scratches our faces - ever so slowly."

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11/3/77 - And Strange de Jim is on vacation in Disney-

'What I really want to be, to tell you the truth, is an eighty-year-old man with potential.'"

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11/26/72 - Marble halls note: "Grace Cathedral is really nice," beams Strange de Jim, "especially if you're wearing taps on your shoes."

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12/15/72 - "Have you ever noticed," asks Strange de Jim, "that a camel without its legs looks like a Volkswagen bug with a beak?" Now that you mention it...

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3/11/73 - Bottoming out: I have this young friend who calls himself Strange de Jim and who is - well - different. Like: "Today," he'll say, "I mourned the loss of Ephemeral, my soap bubble. Once you've named them, you hate to see them burst" ... Or, "Last night I folded paper till I reached oragami" ... Sometimes, when the phone rings, Stange puts on a nasal, metallic accent and intones: "This is a recording. When you hear the beep, you have thirty seconds to leave your message. Beep!" After the caller, whose name, say, is Fred, leaves his message, Strange whispers, "Okay, Fred," and hangs up.

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3/25/73 - Maura Lee, watching Greta Garbo in "Ninotchka" on the tube: "Golly, she sure looks young." Strange de Jim: "That's the advantage of making a movie a long time ago."

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4/24/73 - Caenfetti: Speaking of the Easter that was, whatever happened to egg rolls? (Outside Chinese restaurants, I mean) ... "As for us," laments Strange de Jim, "we were going to have an Easter egg hunt Sunday, but I lost the eggs."

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4/29/73 - "Be careful!" warns Strange de Jim. "There's a smile loose in the neighborhood, and it's about to attack your lips." (Did it work?)

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5/31/73 - On the other hand, score one for our side. "Where else but in San Francisco," observes Strange de Jim, "would your morning mail include an announcement of the opening of a new yoga institute and an engraved invitation to a Tupperware orgy, both addressed to "Occupant"?

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6/3/73 - Strange de Jim and I think no-fault earthquake insurance is a great idea, but so do the insurance companies; so maybe it shouldn't be pushed too hard.

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9/28/73 - Currently visiting Manhattan is another of our favorite Jims, this one being the dude who calls himself Strange de Jim. "What I can't figure out," he postcards, "is how the muggers get up the nerve to venture into Central Park after dark" ... (Strange is in N.Y. attempting to market his latest invention, a quick-release chastity belt, with remote control option).

11:30, whichever comes first." Dance, fool, dance.

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5/10/75 - "I think the answer," responds Strange de Jim to a question nobody asked, "is to make air pollution so big it won't fit into your nostrils."

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3/10/74 - From the uncollected thoughts of Strange de Jim: "I should have known this wasn't going to be my lucky incarnation when I was thrown out of the delivery room for being underage." ... Om Shanti Spoken Here. Om, as Strange has said, is the dial tone of the universe.

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4/29/75 - Strange de Jim browsing Dalton's bookstore at Sutter and Kearny, noticed that Shelf No. 28 is labeled "Sex & Etiquette," and murmured, "Just watch the hostess -- that's always been MY rule!"

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7/27/75 - Okay okay: "It's absolutely not true," insists Strange de Jim, "that to reach puberty I had to stand on a stool."

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11/2/75 - "When you open a cigar store," inquires Strange de Jim, "are you supposed to hand out free babies?"

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1/5/76 - Strange de Jim attended a holiday party at

which a guy, determined to be the Life of Same, announced, "Hey, everybody, wanna see the underwear I got for Christmas?" Nobody said a word. Thus encouraged, he dropped his trousers to reveal he wasn't wearing any underwear, at which Strange said, "Very nice. Do they sell it in men's sizes?" ... It was at artist Satty's party for Jack Nicholson that Strange said to the star, "I saw you in 'Gone With the Wind' and you were just great." Jack, very straight: "That was Clark Gable." Strange: "Same difference" (Nicholson is not ready for Strange de Jim, but who is?)

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12/8/76 - That brings up Strange de Jim. Don't ask me why, it just does. A lot of people ask me if there is such a person, whose witticisms I quote from time to time, and I'm not sure. However, this message, titled "The Story of Strange de Jim," just arrived:

"Strange de Jim was delivered postage due. 'Birth for me was a very frightening experience,' he relates. 'I was glad just to get out of it alive. And believe you me, next time around I'm not going to make the mistake of sitting in the Caesarian Section again.'

"In the maternity ward, Strange switched i.d. bracelets with the baby whose parents made the best faces through the glass. He was in his teens before he sat his mother and father down and broke the news to them that they were adopted.

"'School was very boring for me,' he remembers. 'I probably would have learned more if I'd known you were supposed to face the front.'

"One day without warning Strange grew up and stumbled into Herb de Caen's column. In no time at all, San Franciscans were stopping each other on the street and asking, 'How are you?' and 'Do you think it will rain?'

When asked his goal in life, Strange replied shyly,

[OGL]